DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 972 PS 012 485

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TITLE The Gifts of Families: Caring, Courage and Competence.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 24p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Altruism; Attachment Behavior; *Child Development; *Child Rearing; Competence; Emotional Development; *Family Life; *Family Relationship; *Parent Child Relationship; Persistence; Personality Development; Problem Solving
IDENTIFIERS Nurturance; *Parenting

ABSTRACT

The author contends that families are uniquely constituted to bestow the gifts of caring, courage, and problem solving ability upon children. Clinical and epistemological insights as well as research evidence concerning child development and family relationships are presented as sources of information which will aid families to bestow these gifts. Among theories considered pertinent to child rearing are: Bettleheim's analysis of the effects of fairy tales on children, Rousseau's and Gesell's notions of naturally unfolding child development, Freud's psychoanalytic view of child development, Watson's behavioristic view of child rearing, Erikson's psychosocial view of personality development, Piaget's view of cognitive development, and the social learning theorists' views of socialization. Research and clinical evidence which are considered germane to parenting include studies which have correlated parental nurturing and parent-child attachment, secure infant attachment and toddler compliance and cooperation with parents, secure infant attachment and infant ego resiliency and social competency. Research on parenting styles conducive to later school achievement, altruistic behavior, and nurturing behavior are discussed. Salient parenting ideas which emerge from research and theory are given. Some suggestions are also given regarding what society can do to promote the development of caring, courage, and problem solving in children. (Author/DB)

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The Gifts of Families: Caring, Courage and Competence

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ED208972

In Frank Baum's wonderful fairy tale, "The Wizard of Oz", Dorothy's chivalrous friends, the Tin Woodsman, the Cowardly Lion and the Scarecrow accompany her to the Emerald City of Oz. They journey there to ask the Wizard for three longed-for gifts. The Tin Man asks for a loving and generous heart, the Lion begs for courage to fulfill adult roles and responsibilities: such as protecting his young friend Dorothy. The Scarecrow desires a brain for as one faces difficulties and assumes the roles of adulthood, intelligence is needed in finding solutions to interpersonal and practical life problems.

In the fairy tale, these gifts - to cherish, to reason with acumen, and to strive bravely to overcome life obstacles - were bestowed as gimmicks and trivial tricks by the charlatan Wizard. Fortunately, the fantasy characters, by their own deeds, had amply shown that they already possessed the treasures of the heart, mind and spirit that they so earnestly sought in the Magic of Oz. But in real life, how shall these priceless three gifts be secured for our children? We long to protect and enhance the development of our greatest natural resource - our children. Yet families often turn to other gifts - toys and trinkets, purchased commodities, televised fakery, to lavish upon their offspring.

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Families may not be aware of the true non-material treasures that they are uniquely constituted to bestow: the gifts of caring, of courage, of problem solving ability. How can parents learn to give these gifts? Clinical and epistemological insights of theorists as well as research evidence from scientists working in the areas of child development and family relationships offer understandings and skills to aid families. Also social systems, such as news media and educational institutions can be organized to assist families to ensure safe delivery of these gifts.

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Contributions from Theories

First, then, what theories have addressed these central concerns of families and what have we learned?

Myths and Legends

The most ancient sources for beliefs about insights into how families cope, how they help or hinder the children they rear, come from religous and mythological theories. In his marvelously insightful book "Uses of Enchantment" Bruno Bettleheim (1976) analyzed many fairy tales. He urges parents to read these tales over and over to children. Children can use the deep messages of the fairy tale as a means to discover ways to face and master various developmental tasks at different stages of their lives. Fairy tales confirm in the child the fitness and the importance of struggling in order to grow up and take charge of one's own destiny. Such stories reassure the child that although dragons and monsters, trials, tribulations, and foolish mistakes abound, yet with ingenuity, goodwill, perseverance, and pluck there will be a way to overcome. The child can with courage and persistance grow up successfully.

Some fairy tales warn of parental "gifts" that bring danger or near-disaster to the child. The poisoned apple proferred by Snow White's stepmother prevented the young girl from budding into sexual maturity and taking on the role of an adult woman, that is, until a handsome prince broke the wicked spell. Indeed, children are often afraid to grow up or take new steps toward maturity before they feel quite ready. The gifts of some families, so teaches that fairy tale, may not always be for a child's flourishing. Some families may be fearful or jealous rather than nurturing of needs related to sexual maturity and independence.

Some myths suggest clearly more positive, priceless gifts of parents. There is an old Greek legend of a fierce combat between Anteus and Hercules. Anteus was full of strength and mightily renewed his courage for the struggle every time he touched his mother Earth, the Goddess Gaia. And he was only bested in

battle when clever Hercules lifted Anteus high in the air and prevented him from drawing sustenance and vigor from body contact with mother Earth. Before we look at what recent researches have confirmed of the psychological truths in such myths, let us inquire about other less antique theories of child rearing and development.

Rousseau

Jean Jacque Rousseau, writing in 1762 of an ideal upbringing for Emile, introduced the idea of simply allowing a child to unfold as a flower. Schooling and learning might not be introduced till adolescence. "With every bit of precocious instruction which you try to force into their minds, you plant a vice in the depths of their hearts", warns the philosopher (1965, p. 79).

> The education of the earliest years should be merely negative. It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error. If only you could let well alone, and get others to follow your example; if you could bring your scholar to the age of twelve strong and healthy, but unable to tell his right hand from his left, the eyes of his understanding would be open to reason as soon as you began to teach him ... By doing nothing to begin with, you would end with a prodigy of education... Exercise his body, his limbs, his senses, his strength, but keep his mind idle as long as you can. (p. 80-81)

According to Rousseau, children really do not need families to educate them; they will be naturally good. Few guidelines for an active, involved parental role in developing intellectual competence in young children can be found in Rousseau's theory. Ironically, Rousseau himself did not, in practice, live by his theory of the "born good" child who seems so easy to rear. All of his offspring, born illegitamately to his housekeeper, were promptly sent away to a foundling institution despite the pleas and tears of their mother.

Gesell

More recently, in this century, Gesell has promulgated somewhat the same view: "The environment can inflect and specify but not engender the basic forms of ontogeny", that is, of a child's individual development (1954, p. 354). Thus, parents are relegated to the role of benevolent guardians.

Fortunately, Gesell was a superb observer and recorder of child behaviors. He has left a detailed legacy of descriptive and cinemagraphic records of infant and child development in middle class cooperative families who cherished their children. The films and records should be particularly useful for caregivers who want to understand the gradual increase in psychomotor competencies over the first years. Learning to build a tall tower with blocks or to lace shoes takes lots of practice.

One advantage of Gesell's work is that a parent who child-watches perceptively can become aware of the stormier or smoother cyclical alternations Gesell describes. Parents can feel reassured as they anticipate that a child will come to calmer, more organized behaviors after a withdrawn or disruptive acting-out period.

Freud

Sigmund Freud, the Viennese father of psychoanalysis, on the other hand, held families strongly responsible for the gift of emotional well-being or of neurosis in children. The world of childhood was a world of infantile sexuality, often mercilessly suppressed by parents, a world of conflicts between childish impulses to sensuous gratification and stern prohibitions of families. A child's impulses to pleasure thus collided with the strictures of society, the more realistic demands of his ego and the severity of his own growing conscience (1965).

The psychoanalytic prescription for gifting children with good mental health became clear. Young ones must be amply breast-fed, gently toilet-trained, and helped to resolve the Oedipal conflict decisively in favor of becoming like the same-sex parent rather than rival for the affections of the opposite-sex parent. Then, by the end of the first six years of life, such family practices would ensure a good beginning toward mental and emotional health. Children would be less likely in adult years to suffer neurotic distortions of personality and inner anguish.

Other theorists in the United States have recommended different family strategies for producing a mature, reasonable child.

Watson

John Watson, a behaviorist, early in this century advocated strictly impersonal conduct with young children. He disapproved of parents who coddled children. Watson advised parents thus:

> There is a sensible way of treating children. Treat them as though they were young adults. Dress them, bathe them with care and circumspection. Let your behavior always be objective and kindly firm. Never hug and kiss them, never let them sit in your lap. If you must, kiss them once on the forehead when they say good night. Shake hands with them in the morning. Give them a pat on the head if they have made an extraordinarily good job of a difficult task. Try it out. In a week's time you will find how easy it is to be perfectly objective with your child and at the same time kindly. You will be utterly ashamed of the mawish, sentimental way you have been handling it...(1965, p.244)

How shall we evaluate this conceptualization of the role of family members? Can parents as kindly animal trainers raise children to be emotionally healthy and effective adults who can face their unknown futures unafraid?

Social Learning Theorists

Social learning theorists, such as Sears, Bandura, and Dollard, have stressed the importance of modeling as an adult technique for socializing children. Children learn what they live with. Sometimes a child postures, scolds dolls, struts, hits others. A child may act in ways that parents find ruefully only too close to adult models they wish the child had not learned to imitate quite so well.

Sears postulates an identification drive that permits caring parents to rear a child with appropriate development of conscience and of sex role behaviors (1957).

> Some (child) behaviors are established by direct training through reward and punishment, others by the process of imitation...A secondary drive of identification produces behavior that is replicative of the parents' qualities, role behaviors, and demands. ...If (a mother) is continuously punitive, and is rarely associated with the satisfying completion of the child's goal striving, her acts will have no part in his action sequence, and there would be no initial instigation to act like her...(p. 155) So long as she continues to use reasonably consistent symbols of love and approval, this process (of learning to act like the parent) will continue...The child who has strong identification provides the necessary stimuli for compliance within his own action system, and hence will behave according to demands even when direct parental control is absent. (p. 157)

Erikson

Erik Erikson's theory illuminates our understanding of the growth of appropriate positive ego identity and the growth of insight into the self as the culmination of earlier emotional learnings. Erikson's thoughtful analysis of development throughout the life span is a chronicle of the vicissitudes and accomplishments of families. In a variety of cultural settings and historical times families adopt and adapt parenting styles to rear children who have the courage to face life with responsibility and the ability to care for themselves and for others (1963; 1980). Mutually responsive interactions within loving families and communities with faith in their ability to engender and sustain the well-being of their infants and children lead to more admirable human accomplishments. With such family supports, the nuclear conflicts, that Erikson posits as characteristically reaching crisis during particular successive stages of development, can be resolved with more favorable outcomes for child personality. Children so reared will not lack in security or competence. Instead, they will develop qualities of trustworthiness and confidence, of initiative and industriousness, of friendliness and capacity for tenderness, of commitment to work and to serve with and for others. Erikson stresses the family's critical role in optimizing the chances in each stage for the child to grow toward a more emotionally positive identity rather than a negative identity of delinquency or inadequacy.

Piaget

Parents, the beloved and loving first teachers of the young may never have been the focus of Jean Piaget's inquiries. Yet, by his conceptualization of the stages of children's thinking, Piaget radically changed our notions of how families and teachers can encourage children to think and learn. He has delineated the processes by which we lay the intellectual foundations so necessary, along with emotional sureties, to secure for children the conceptual means for successfully

meeting the challenges of their lives (Piaget, 1952).

Encounters with environmental events and with people in judicious doses and supportive settings can promote what Piaget calls "equilibration" the ongoing twin processes of assimilation and accommodation. The child struggles to make sense of new information, ideas and contradictions with the understandings he or she currently has. When these present concepts are not sufficient, the child will try to adapt to the unfamiliar or new or hard-to-understand idea or event.

Children's minds are forever challenged to grapple with new ideas, such as the rules of addition or the reality of parental divorce. Even the reappearance of papa's face over and over in a peek-a-boo game puzzles a baby who has not yet grasped the concept of the permanence of objects that may disappear out of sight for a while. And how complicated are the reciprocal and hierarchical relationships that children must learn to make sense of in families of uncles, aunts, cousins, and grandparents.

Piagetian theory teaches that the child has a positive need for rich and varied and manageable transactions with toys, with objects, with children and adults in social relationships. Yet, a great variety of such experiences by itself is not enough. The child must have opportunities to become actively engaged in such transactions. Equilibration theory additionally suggests that this learning must be so arranged by parents and teachers that the new ideas, the new demands for maturity, the new skills to be learned are somewhat challenging but not overwhelmingly difficult or bewildering for the child. Such a careful match between families' expectations and a child's ability will enable the child to learn, will lure the child into trying to achieve, trying to make sense of the adults' requirements and demands. Adults must become good "match-makers" (Honig, 1981b). They need to learn skills of focusing and refocusing a child's attention to relevant attributes to clarify concepts and demands the child

is expected to decode and with which she is expected to comply.

In a post-Piagetian world, it should become difficult (or at least embarassing) for adults "literate" in Piagetian theory to jibe at a preschooler for acting "dumb" or "bad". The so-called "naughty" baby who dives into his milk glass to retrieve a bit of soppy bread that has floated therein may be vigorously carrying out experiments "to see what happens if". Trial and error actions that try the patience of families are a persistent hallmark of "stage 5" of the sensorimotor period. The tot who systematically drops and throws all his toys from the highchair tray and peers each time with great interest to see where all have fallen may be in the throes of discovering, through her own actions, the concepts of "near" and "far" and the pitching trajectories necessary to attain such spatial distances. The preschooler who cries and tugs at his father to prevent him from clipping scraggly hedges along the driveway may sincerely believe that the bushes are alive and that father will hurt them. Such animistic thinking is characteristic of Piaget's prelogical child.

Piaget has tuned us in indelibly to the different, the non-logical mind of the preoperational child. Judy enters the day care center with her mother. "Mommy, see Bruce over there. He doesn't obey the rule. You know, the rule you taught me that if someone pinches or hits, you are not supposed to hit back. He pinched me back when I pinched him!". This latter message was conveyed with sincere indignation. Mother gulped. She started off in her calmest tone of voice, "But why did you pinch him, Judy?" "Well, because... oh, <u>that</u> doesn't matter, Mommy. He disobeyed the rule!". Mother re-explained once more all the family rules and reasons about not hurting others. Yet, mother understood clearly the quintessential preoperational inability of the little girl to coordinate all interested parties' points of view on the subject of pinching. The

typical egocentric four-year old, so Piaget has taught us, cannot easily hold several different viewpoints and coordinate them into one reciprocal, consistent, coherent framework of social or physical knowledge.

Later, mother recounted this episode to the day care teacher. Teacher frowned, did not grasp the intellectual difficulties of the young child, and somehow assumed that the mother was only reciting an anecdote to illustrate the child's deliberate misbehavior.

Such episodes should convince us that parents and teachers and all who care for young children need to understand the ideas of Erikson and the ideas of Piaget in order to increase the chances of choosing aptly rather than ineptly how to understand, talk with, and influence the young.

Research Findings on Positive Parenting

In addition to the theoretically inspired insights that may enhance families' abilities to rear children well, research and clinical evidence also offer guidelines for child rearing. What particular parenting practices promote the optimal development of children? Hundreds of research studies suggest that specific kinds and qualities of family functioning, teaching techniques and rearing conditions have differential effects. Let us look at a sample of researches that correlate parental practices with higher probability of desirable outcomes, such as intellectual striving for excellence, altruistic and prosocial behaviors toward others, and adventurousness and persistence in meeting adversities.

Loving Responsive Parenting leads to secure attachment

Dr. Mary Ainsworth and her colleagues have conducted careful in-home observational studies (Ainsworth, Bell & Stayton, 1974). She has used the "strange situation" technique to assess the security of attachment of infants to mothers. In the strange situation, an infant and mother are arranged in a room, such that the mother leaves the infant alone with a stranger several times and each time rejoins the baby after a brief separation. Reunion behaviors are coded as well

as willingness of the baby to play with toys rather than spend all time in the situation on the mother's lap. Several findings have been replicated over and over. Babies whose mothers have been sensitive to their signals of distress and have ministered promptly and capably to their needs and have given them floor freedom to explore the home environment seemed to be doing much better. These infants scored higher on developmental tests at the end of the first year of life. When they needed to communicate with mother, they used a variety of communications, such as calls, coos, tugs, smiles, rather than crying. When mothers were fairly insensitive to infant needs for care and comfort and delayed in meeting these needs promptly, their infants cried more in the last quarter of the first year of life and were more irritable.

The courage to explore was related to nurturant mothering. Babies securely attached to mothers who had been consistently sensitive to their signals were more likely to feel comfortable about getting down from mother's lap and exploring toys in the playroom.

The most disquieting signs in babies with less nurturant mothers were their ambivalence about accepting comfort from mother upon reunion or their avoidance of mother's greeting and attempts to comfort when she returned to the playroom. These babies had not learned to trust that comfort was surely obtainable from a mothering one. Something was amiss in the early love relationship. We have been discussing love, competence and courage as if these were separable gifts. Ainsworth's work suggests that the courage to love and to reach out to get needs met flows from the loving ways of parents in meeting babies' early needs.

What are some of the benefits to families who minister to infant needs for nurturance promptly, perceptively and appropriately?

Secure infants are more cooperative

Secure attachment early in a baby's life has been positively related to child compliance and cooperativeness later in the toddler years (Stayton, Hogan & Ainsworth, 1971). In another research, Londerville & Main (1981) found that mothers who used warmer voices in giving commands and gentler physical handling of babies at one year had toddlers who at 21 months were more compliant. The children were more cooperative not only with their mothers but with an infant tester and with a strange adult caregiver. Friendly overtures of these adults could not coax compliance from toddlers who had earlier received ungentle, less nurturant handling.

Toddlers who have been abused, neglected, or physically punished in infancy show aversive responses to adults, even when the adults make many warm, friendly advances. Abused toddlers are more likely to avoid eye contact, hit aggressively at peers and adults and be uncooperative (George & Main, 1979).

Secure attachment promotes later ego resiliency and competency

Secure attachment between parent and baby may be regarded as an emergent pattern of personality organization (Sroufe, 1979). A securely attached baby can use the caregiver as a base from which to venture into explorations as well as actively initiate contact upon reunion with the adult.

Alison Clarke-Stewart (1973) observed mothers with infants 9-18 months of age at home. Measures of competence-cognitive, language and social - were highly interrelated. A significant relation was found between the factors of children's competence and patterns of maternal care. Mothers' verbal stimulation, presentation of play materials and positive social behaviors with their babies were related positively to children's language development, skill with objects, and positive social interactions. Restricting, ineffective mothers had more irritable, less exploratory babies.

Beckwith (1971) found these same kinds of correlations when observing adopted babies with their mothers. Maternal responsiveness, talking and allowance of exploration were correlated with higher developmental quotients in infants at the end of the first year of life.

Sroufe (1979) followed 48 infants who had been assessed as securely or insecurely attached in infancy. As toddlers, these children were more enthusiastic in play, more persistent at problem solving and were prone to seek help from adults when tool-using problems were very difficult. In contrast, insecurely attached infants were more oppositional, angry, distressed and often fell apart completely when faced with a challenge to competency such as a difficult, frustrating lever problem.

Sroufe and and colleagues (Arend, Gove & Sroufe, 1979) followed some of these toddlers until five years of age. Teachers independent of earlier ratings, described the earlier securely attached children as highly resiliant, resourceful in initiating activities, self-reliant, confident, curious and exploring. Children who in infancy had avoided or resisted maternal comforting upon reunion were described either as overcontrolled or undercontrolled. Thus, the core of later competence seems to reside in patterns of early tender, responsive care that infants have received. The gifts of families do not come singly. Enduring patterns of adaptation which will permit or interfere with later scholastic and social adaptations can be engendered by differential early responses of families to the babies in their care.

Early Patterns of parenting in relation to school success

Certain parenting styles have been found to characterize those children who are good learners and good friends in school. After many years of interviewing and observing parents, Baumrind (1977) concluded that there are three main types of parenting styles: authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. The latter parents are firm in setting rules, use reason and explanation when directing

the child, encourage competence, and exhibit personal warmth, concern for and interest in the child. Children of authoritative parents (in contrast to both the more dominating, punitive parents and the more lax, permissive parents) were more responsible, active, successful in school work and popular with peers.

> Authoritarian control and permissive noncontrol both shield the child from the opportunity to engage in vigorous interaction with people... Unrealistically high or low standards may curb or underestimate the child so that he fails to achieve the knowledge and experience which could realistically reduce his dependence on the outside world... Spirited give and take within the home, if accompanied by respect and warmth, may teach the child how to express aggression in self-serving and prosocial causes and to accept the partially unpleasant consequences of such actions... Authoritative control can achieve responsible conformity with group standards without loss of individual autonomy or self assertiveness.(p. 258)

That such parenting styles do not only work for middle class parents was demonstrated in the work of Swan & Stavros (1973).These investigators interviewed parents of highly motivated, achieving kindergarten children from black, low-income families in New Orleans elementary Title XX schools. The parents typically reported a strong positive enjoyment of their children. They read frequently to their children, engaged in animated dinner conversations, and respected the abilities and unique interests of each child. These parents felt comfortable and competent in child rearing. Many more of these families had fathers present. Chores were part of each child's responsibility daily. These achieving children were treated as integral, helpful important members of their families.

Competence can be discerned very early. Carew and her colleagues (1977)

observed infants from 14 months to three years in interaction within their families. At the end of the infancy period all preschoolers were carefully tested for practical and psychometric competencies. Then the long records of home interactions were carefully related to the children's competence. Family patterns of supporting and eliciting competence were clear. Parents with competent children had behaved as teachers, facilitators, sensitive observers. They had engaged in verbal role play, read alot to their children, provided a rich variety of toys, events and occurrences in household life. They had taken their children on outings and allowed the children to help at tasks such as washing dishes, raking leaves and laundry. Participation in such household tasks gave little ones the feeling of belonging, of being an active participant in getting the work of the family accomplished. In contrast, ineffective children tended to come from families with high punitiveness and the use of physical harshness to discipline. Their rules and enforcements were sometimes arbitrary. They often denigrated or ignored children's needs.

The outcomes of these researches seem to point to a strong relationship between positive family affect toward very young children and later cognitive competence at the learning tasks of school and home on the part of the children. Loving and learning are intertwined. As families provide secure loving environments coupled with appropriate language and learning stimulations, their children tend to acquire competencies for dealing with the world of ideas, books and situations requiring problem-solving skills.

Parenting styles and altruism

What kinds of family childrearing styles have been found to produce more empathetic, sharing, caring and helpful children? Yarrow & Waxler (1976) asked parents to tape-record emotional episodes and their babies' and toddlers' responses to such episodes on a daily basis. Children who very early as toddlers showed signs of empathetic caring had parents who typically were very firm about not

accepting or allowing aggressive acts by their little ones. Parents were also quite loving and comforting if the babies experienced a distress themselves.

The results of several other child-rearing studies suggest that warm, nurturant parents tend to raise altruistic children. Rutherford & Mussen (1968) gave each of 31 nursery school boys some candies that the children could either keep for themselves or share with two best friends. The 17 boys who were most generous in sharing candy with their friends described their fathers as much more nurturant than did the 14 boys who refused to share their candy.

Parents who provide nurturance are also providing models for nurturant behaviors. It is not surprising then that their children may feel fulfilled enough to be able to show concern for others as well as give active help. These children have family role models who facilitate their children's ability to grow up becoming altruistic, pro-social people in their own lives.

What Families Can Do

Using theories and research findings as a base, we can now articulate some of the salient ideas that families need to integrate into their patterns of parenting.

First, infants need dominion over a caregiver's body. Humans are skin-sharing creatures. Infants and young children need laps and breasts and shoulders and hips to mold into, to drape against. Ultimately, such physical assurances of love allow toddlers to become more comfortable about separating from adults when inner urges for growth lead to adventures of creeping and toddling and pattering into the world beyond the loving bodies of caring adults (Kaplan, 1978). Given such a secure body base, the young child will find it easier to venture into the wider world of neighborhood and school. Body-loving promotes secure attachment that fuels courage to be curious, courage to explore, to concentrate on teacher's lessons.

Second, families need to be responsive to child signals. It is difficult

for adults unaccustomed to the ways of small creatures and busy with adult occupations and preoccupations to be sensitive to children's needs, unless the adults become fine-tuned noticers. A downcast face, sagging shoulders, tense grinding teeth, fearful eyes, angry fists, restless wanderings - these are signs for families that all is not well in the interral economy of the child. Adults who are responsive in appropriate ways to child signals of joy and distress teach the child a model of caring concern. Altruism and compassion for those in distress take shape early in the behaviors of toddlers whose families model empathetic caring and courtesies coupled with strong disapproval if the child ever hurts others.

Third, families need to cultivate authoritative parenting styles. High expectations for achievement, firm household rules and clear reasons for those rules coupled with sincere interest and attention to the child as a person nourishes competence and altruism in children. Altruists are likely to be children of nurturant parents who are good models of prosocial behaviors, use reasoning in discipline, maintain high standards and encourage their children to accept responsibility for others early. (Mussen & Eisenberg-Berg, 1977).

Fourth, mastery of language gives a child the power to succeed in learning and communicating in school. Families that talk with, listen to, sing with, respond verbally to children are promoting the power of language. Posing Socratic, open-ended questions and choice questions allows children to reason and think about their ideas as they struggle to respond to adults (Honig & Wittmer, 1981). Reading to children promotes intellectual competence. Rich provision of early language mastery experiences is the single variable most frequently found correlated with later cognitive ability on developmental tests (Carew, 1980).

Fifth, families need to arrange learning experiences that allow children to engage in,struggle with, persist at, and master both socialization tasks

and intellectual tasks. Perceptive adults use matchmaking skills. They set tasks and challenges that are just a bit difficult. They do not overwhelm the child with demands beyond present capabilities. They do not shame the child for clumsy tries. Encouragements that match family requirements to the ever developing potentialities of the child will ensure competent rather than discouraged children. Children need psychological space to grow. That space must allow for early tries and failures, for stumbles and bumps that occur along the road to mastering knowledge and skills.

Finally, families need to feel crazy about their kids! As children feel loved, delighted in, admired for their being, O.K. as they are, not as some other real or phantom child may be, they feel the courage to use life energies to grow, to explore, to learn, and to cope with their lives.

What Can Society Do?

Children are society's greatest natural resource. How little some citizens understand the uses and abuses of this resource! Knowledge, understanding and skills related to infant and child-rearing should be guaranteed by a Bill of Rights for parents and other caregivers (Honig, 1979). By every communication means that communities can ingeniously devise, such "literacy" in child-rearing must be promoted. A concerted effort could, more certainly than at present, ensure the probability that families can temper and inform their mutual give and take, their processes and problem-solving with their children. Children can be reared with chances for more positive fulfillments rather than with the disappointments, the lack of adult cherishing and rages which currently fuel countless delinquencies.

Boards of Education can make a committment to implement such a Bill of Rights. Junior and Senior High School Family Life courses can be coupled with practical experiences in child observation and care. Practice will need to include experience with infants and toddlers as well as with preschoolers and

kindergarteners. If a quality caregiving day-care center is located within a high school complex, then it can serve as the hub around which social studies and history courses can organize teachings. Curricula can be enriched to include historical and social perspectives on the rearing of children. Students can then follow developmental studies of how children arrive ultimately to lead fulfilling adult lives as neighbors, workers and unique persons in society.

Science students can observe first hand the struggles of young children to make sense of the physics and chemistry of solids and liquids as they pile blocks, roll clay, drip paints, and pour water. Teenagers can be taught in practica how to arrange hands-on experiences for kindergarten and first grade children. With such creative arrangements children will gradually discover the principles of conservation of mass, length, weight and number as they explore on their own the possibilities and properties of materials.

Public communication media can contribute in ingenious ways to this educational process. Some suggestions are:

*Television spots on topics such as positive discipline techniques, importance of reading to young children, or the use of neighborhood resources such as shops, libraries, and parks for enhancing learning.

*Radio call-in talk shows that encourage parents to ask questions on the air, and to express their concerns and child-rearing puzzlements with professional expertise available in the studio.

*Newspaper tips on more effective fathering and mothering. Such columns can be similar to columns currently offering tips on how to garden, make household repairs or play bridge!

Decisions about the lives of children are often of immediate concern to professionals whose training and expertise has a medical, legal or other such focus. Professionals such as Public Health nurses, Family Court judges, social

workers, and pediatricians need child development and family life courses added to their core professional training requirements.

Conclusions

Perfection in parenting is never possible. Parents are humans, not angels. But, families can strive with societal help toward increasing the quality of their interactions with children. The ways in which each family uniquely teaches, disciplines and loves children can be illuminated by current knowledge and insights. Adults who appreciate the twin human needs, for close intimacy and for sturdy individuality, can permit children to "see-saw into maturity" (Honig, 1981[a]). The priceless gifts of families-compassion, courage and competence-allow children in their turn to grow up to become good neighbors, concerned citizens and capable compassionate parents.

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